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ABSTRACT

This study examines the mentoring practices of a mentor teacher who was actively engaged in creating an inquiry-focused, year-long internship, noting the intern-mentor dyad's negotiation of a successful learning context as perceived by the intern, the mentor, and a university faculty member. Data collection involved both ethnographic and phenomenological methods, including journal entries written by mentors and interns, field notes, interviews, e-mails, meeting minutes, and observation sheets. The researcher made periodic member checks with the mentor, intern, principal, and university supervisor. The intern participated in ongoing weekly discussion with the researcher, and the mentor participated in three interviews. Collaborative teaching was central to the mentoring, as was a high degree of purposeful, professional dialogue with the intern. The inquiry-oriented mentoring involved making problem posing a part of the professional culture within the classroom so the intern would develop a problem posing stance toward professional practice over the course of the internship. (SM)

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CLAUDIA'S CYCLE OF INQUIRY: A PEDAGOGY FOR MENTORING (PART TWO)

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Many years ago, William James and John Dewey initiated discussions about the importance of teacher professional development opening the dialogue for conversations about powerful forms for supervision. William James (1925) in his Talks to Teachers on Psychology wrote that the success or failure of education was fundamentally determined by the classroom teacher. He stated, "Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art; and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediate inventive mind must make the application, by using its originality." These thoughts highlight the key role or the "inventive mind" of the teacher in the teaching process as well as the key role a teacher plays in her own professional learning. In addition to the key role the teacher plays in her own growth, John Dewey recognized that teacher learning and growth is socially contextualized and requires the interaction of teachers around professional issues. These complimentary ideas regarding the importance of the teacher in teacher learning and the social contextualization of learning to teach set the stage for supervision to unfold as an educational field of study.

In response to these beliefs, the area of clinical supervision gained momentum during the last thirty years, providing a theoretical framework for organizing, implementing, and evaluating teacher professional development (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer). Cogan (1973) emphasized the importance of supervision that unfolds overtime, develops a professionally responsible teacher who is analytical about her own performance, and believing that "Teachers are better left alone than merely tampered with." More recently, Goldsberry (1986) describes the practicality of clinical supervision noting the need for contextual support from within the organization in order for teachers to develop the dispositions necessary to evaluate one's own performance. Nolan

(1989) and Nolan and Hillkirk (1991) argue that clinical supervision does lead to reflective professional practice resulting in professional growth.

These historical underpinnings of the key supervision elements set the stage for a subset of "supervisors", referred to as mentors, to advance their efforts in nurturing reflective teachers who play key roles in their own professional learning. A mentor's work is socially contextualized, based on the interaction of teachers around professional issues and carried out over time. Today, mentors who work side by side prospective teachers or new inductees have begun thinking about their own supervision work in new ways. In the last decade increasing attention has been given to providing mentoring for novice teachers entering the profession. According to Odell and Huling (2000):

> Mentoring can be viewed productively as a professional practice that occurs in the context of teaching whenever an experienced teacher supports, challenges, and guides novice teachers in their teaching practice (xii).

Although this definition suggests what a mentor does, it offers little understanding of how mentoring is done. Since cooperating teachers have been shown to have significant influence over the development of prospective teachers (Guyton, and McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre, Bryd, and Foxx, 1996), an understanding of how effective mentors shape and give meaning to their own mentoring practices could well augment the existing literature.

To date, researchers have worked towards defining characteristics of productive mentor/novice relationships (Odell, 1990; Zimpher and Rieger, 1988). Additionally, others have described specific practices of mentors (Feiman-Nemser, 1992) and articulated what should be included in preparing mentors (Odell, 1990). What has been missing from the literature are the

voices of mentor teachers who when given the space and authority, construct their own supervision work with prospective teachers as they work side-by-side in a shared classroom. As mentor teachers assume these new roles, how do mentor teachers construct a meaning of supervision?

Research Methodology

Teacher stories provide a powerful tool for sense-making and sharing. Barone (1998) concludes that to date, "the notion of story has rarely been related to the field of supervision within empirical research" (p. 1109). This study of mentoring practices shares the story of a mentor teacher using interpretive (Erickson, 1986) and case study methodology (Stake, 1995) informed by both ethnographic (Wolcott, 1994) and phenomenological (Denzin, 1989) lenses. This methodology captures the story of how this mentor teacher comes to know and carry out her work with a prospective teacher over an eighteen month period. The unit of analysis was the mentor teacher who was selected from a pool of six closely studied mentors using a unique case selection procedure (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). In this case, the unique attributes included: 1) the mentor's willingness to actively engage in creating an inquiry focused year-long internship and 2) the intern/mentor dyad's negotiation of a successful learning context as perceived by the intern, mentor, and university faculty member. The selection of this mentor occurred after a six month period when the pool of mentors studied narrowed based on this selection criteria. The result is the following case of "Claudia."

The techniques used to enhance the quality of the analysis and ensure trustworthiness of the study include source triangulation, method triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and

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member checks. Source triangulation required "checking out the consistency of different sources within the same method" (Patton, 1990, p.464). Method triangulation relied on "checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data-collection methods" (Patton, 1990, p. 464). The data sources used in this analysis included: 1) journal entries written by mentors and interns, 2) fieldnotes, 3) interviews, 4) e-mail, 5) meeting minutes, and 6) observation sheets. Theoretical triangulation occurred as the data was analyzed using both ethnographic and phenomenological lenses (Patton, 1990). Finally, periodic member checks with the mentor, the intern, the principal, and other university faculty were also a part of the analysis. Additionally, the mentor participated in three semi-structured interviews focused on her experiences working as a mentor. The intern participated in on-going informal weekly discussion with the researcher and engaged in a single semi-structured interview near the end of the school year. The tape recordings of each interview were transcribed, allowing for accurate reporting of the participant's responses and enabling the researcher to interpret specific responses in the context of the entire transcript. The typical length of the responses was in the form of many paragraphs.

After reviewing the data set multiple times utilizing Wolcott's (1994) methodological structure of description, analysis, and interpretation, three themes emerged and as these themes took shape systematic searches of the data for disconfirming and confirming evidence were conducted (Erickson, 1986). The remaining sections of this paper present an analysis and interpretation of Claudia's mentoring. Claudia's mentoring work, captured using the metaphor of a playwright, portrays the inquiry cycle of mentoring she uses to help her intern grow professionally.

Claudia's Work as a Playwright

Claudia's mentoring work is active and mirrors the work of a playwright. As she mentors her intern Julia, Claudia: 1) sets the stage for collaborative teaching throughout the year, 2) directs to enhance the professional script or talk within the classroom, and 3) develops a problem posing culture where a cycle of inquiry develop and thrive.

Collaborative Teaching

Collaboration or co-teaching is a central element of Claudia's mentoring. Both Claudia and her intern, Julia, value collaboration in the act of teaching and they demonstrate this as they work side-by-side. Claudia appreciates Julia's willingness to play her role as a collaborator in the act of teaching:

> Julia and Claudia stood near the center of the room as the children busied themselves at their seats. They talked quietly to each other posing alternatives to how to organize the activity and what kind of feedback to give the children. Julia and Claudia collaborated as they gave directions to the children. They seemed comfortable in "feeding off" of each other. The interaction is supportive and appears to be reciprocal in nature. (fieldnotes, 2-99)

Claudia and Julia share responsibility for whole group instruction as evidenced in on-going opportunities for co-teaching where one of them takes the lead and the other follows in a more supportive role.

> We really have a community in our classroom, not just with the kids, but with the adults too. That allows us to play off of each other and jump in and support and

> add to each other's teaching. There are many times when I need Ray or Julia to help me do something. We talk to each other as we teach, "Now Miss T is going to come around and hand out the papers." It doesn't have to interrupt instruction because we have to do it that way because we can't plan out every single thing. It is working off each other. I try to include them a lot - "I don't know Miss T, it is awful noisy in here today. What's going on?" They just play right into that. It also keeps them on their toes. (Claudia, interview B, 169-176)

Claudia describes how the adults work together in her classroom:

> If we were to make a movie, I would want to include a scene of how we work together - everybody in the class. A lesson with all of us involved and the roles are changing. Somebody might be taking more responsibility for direction and another person might be more support. Then we might be co-teaching. Even Julia and Ray could be co-teaching while I am working with children in the back. But definitely a scene that gives a sense of how we work together. (Claudia, interview, B, 472-476)

As Claudia writes her mentoring script she creates opportunities for both individual and collaborative teaching by deliberately providing opportunities for changing roles and responsibilities between the cast members. Claudia believes Julia's comfort with collaborating in the teaching process is imperative to her growth.

Professional Talk

This second attribute of Claudia's work as a playwright grows from the purposeful professional dialogue or script that she uses in her cycle of mentoring to develop readiness, co-plan, co-teach, co-reflect, and co-problem pose. Three purposes emerge in analyzing Claudia's talk: building relationships, planning for instruction, and making sense of instruction. Claudia engages in relationship talk which enhances the quality of their relationship and establishes readiness for her mentoring work.

> Julia shared that she felt like she and Claudia were starting to get to know each other better now. They were talking more at school, they were talking on the phone. She said, "Sometimes she even sits next to me at lunch and we talk about clothes or shopping. Stuff like that." Julia seemed to think that her work with Claudia was going to be stronger now that they were talking more. (Fieldnotes, 11/98)

Claudia's personal talk leads to a trusting relationship which they both believe creates readiness for the instructional talk to unfold. Oberg (1989) also emphasizes the role of relationship in her supervision work suggesting that the supervisory relationship with the teacher is a key to the beginning of reflection. She suggests that supervisors must find a workable balance between their own authority and the teacher's self-determination. She continues:

> It means that supervisor and teacher meet each other as human beings in a place where there are no established ground rules, no predetermined role descriptions to fall back on. Their common ground is their shared concern for the educational good of themselves and their students. (Oberg, p. 62)

Claudia and Julia's relationship share these qualities.

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Claudia also engages in instructional talk with Julia as they co-plan and co-teach. Although Claudia provides a framework for Julia to plan within, planning talk is usually not directed by Claudia. Rather, planning talk results from Julia's questioning and Julia "owns" the agenda for the talk:

> Claudia gives her intern, Julia, a substantial amount of freedom as she plans for instruction. She assigns Julia certain teaching responsibilities that remain the same each week. For those lessons, Julia is expected to set goals, plan, and implement instruction. She consults Claudia when she has questions about curriculum content and goals, particular students needs, resources, or instructional strategies. (Fieldnotes, 1/99)

As far as Claudia is concerned, Julia is responsible for deciding and explaining "how she is going to teach," "why she is going to teach," and the logistics of the teaching such as the time and materials (Triad Journal, 1/99). Claudia believes her role is to support Julia's work by talking through her struggles much like a consultant.

Teaching talk is a natural result of the predominant collaborative model of team teaching that Claudia and Julia have used to shape their work within the classroom. As they engage in teaching the children, they concurrently engage in collaborative teaching talk, chiming into each other's instruction and problem solving together throughout the day. Teaching talk results from the collaborative teaching model and sets the standard for and acceptance of teaching talk.

Claudia and Julia also engage in reflective talk both during and after teaching has occurred. In these teaching conversations, Claudia and Julia discuss specific students, logistics, or pedagogical strategies that are a part of the lesson.

> As they taught, they constantly spoke out loud to each other across the room. "That is a good question, Miss T. Did you hear that?" and in response the two of them would make on-going adjustments to the lesson. (Researcher's Journal 12-98)

Julia also shares her reflection on their talk after teaching:

> The way the conversation goes after the lesson depends on the question or problem and my level of frustration...We talk about it and I share my worries... If I am frustrated she gives me more concrete ideas and if I am not we do a lot of talking. (3-99, 160-165)

Claudia's mentoring includes "writing in" opportunities for shared reflection highlighting the social dynamic of reflection.

This form of mentoring suggests a movement from Schon's (1983) concepts of "reflection in action" and "reflection on action" to a socially constructed "co-reflection-in-action" and "co-reflection on action." Schon describes reflection as largely a solitary action occurring in two time frames: "Reflection-on-action" occurs after an action as a way of thinking about a completed lesson and "Reflection-in-action" occurs during a lesson. Zeichner and Liston (1996) and Day (1993) believe that the solitary nature of the reflection process described by Schon is limiting and acknowledge the power of collaborative reflection. This is the type of on-going talk that occurs as Claudia mentors. However, based on discussions with both Claudia and Julia, this reflective talk is the most difficult to integrate into the day because collaborative reflection is not a natural part of the "doing" of teaching.

Claudia uses two different types of theatrical conversational tools, soliloquy and dialogue, to model and develop Julia's reflective talk. Soliloquy occurs when Claudia talks out loud making her own planning, teaching, and reflecting process explicit for Julia to hear. More common however, Claudia uses dialogue to engage Julia in an exchange of ideas or opinions.

> Claudia shared the amount of talk centered on how to help Mary. They have spent time generating a case history, talking with other teachers, specialists, etc… She was surprised at how much time had been focused on determining interventions that might work, testing them out, and then discussing them together. (Fieldnotes, 6/99)

Because of this collaborative approach to teaching, Claudia and Julia move beyond an individual reflection or soliloquy with the context or situation to a conversation or dialogue that shares their individual reflections creating a much richer text for enhancing teaching. Co-reflection is a natural result of the collaborative teaching relationship that they have built.

Building on the co-planning and co-teaching talk previously described, Claudia also engages Julia in "reflection through recollection" discussed by Garman (1986). Reflection through recollection occurs when memory must be used to recall earlier incidences. In this case, reflection through recollection is a collaborative activity between Claudia and Julia and a method of co-introspection into Julia's work as well as their shared work. As Claudia and Julia "reflect through recollection" they co-recall the events, verbally co-form a representation of the event, co-interpret what happened, and then co-confirm their interpretation. The trusting and collegial foundation of their relationship allows Julia and Claudia to hear each other's perspective on their individual and shared teaching.

Claudia's mentoring features an ability to engage in on-going professional dialogue around issues of teaching embedded in a collaborative context. These features provide a foundation for Claudia and Julia's shared work and prepare the stage for inquiry-oriented mentoring to unfold.

Cycle of Inquiry Based on Problem Posing

Inquiry-oriented mentoring looks collaborative and includes a great deal of professional talk. But what does inquiry-oriented mentoring feel like? To answer that question, one must see that Claudia's work shifts the act of mentoring beyond the inquiry process of co-planning, co-teaching and co-reflecting- about practices to purposefully nurturing a problem posing professional culture.

A problem posing stance to professional practice emerges naturally from Claudia's own intellectual style and creeps into all stages of the inquiry process:

> I understand making my work problematic is looking at things that don't run smoothly and looking at things year after year. Teaching is not static. We are dealing with human beings and those interactions are not static. So you constantly have to be looking at the uniqueness of our classroom community and adjust accordingly. I think making your work problematic feels interesting to me. Sometimes it is unnerving because I have to get the children somewhere and sometimes we aren't moving at the pace we need to go. So then I have to try new things. (Claudia, interview B, 427-433)

The place Claudia begins her work with Julia is shared problem-posing. Schon (1989) highlights the difference between problem solving and problem posing:

> In the process of problem solving…problems of choice or decision are solved through the selection, from available means, of the one best suited to the established ends. Here we ignore problem setting, the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen. (p. 10)

The teacher's problem posing ability and the process by which a teacher identifies, defines, and frames a problem is of central importance to learning. Claudia brings to her work the keen ability to pose problems or issues around her professional practice:

> I think Claudia thinks inquiry is a part of what she does everyday. She says it is something she does everyday. One example she tells me about is how she wonders about something and then she goes home and really thinks about it and then she tries something. There is action with the thinking. Doing something new and trying new ways. (Julia, interview, 415-419)

Claudia emphasizes this same point using the following description:

> Within the classroom, I feel inquiry can be used as a way to benefit your students, if you are looking into why something occurs or how to change something you are doing to improve your teaching and also to help students be successful. I feel that inquiry is something that goes on throughout teaching. It is just something that is an integral part of teaching. (Claudia, interview B, 12-15)

Shulman (1989) also recognizes the power of a problem-posing stance in conjunction with a social dynamic and views teacher discourse or talk as a way of overcoming the limitations of individual thinking. He suggests that knowledge advanced through a process of continuous debate, dialogue, deliberation, and reasoning provides for competing viewpoints to be heard. By engaging in this dialectical process the participants' discourse becomes a process of elevating "knowing."

Claudia also actively and deliberately uses voice her voice to encourage the dialectic but also uses silence to facilitate and provoke the development of Julia's own problem posing behavior. For example, as Julia plans, teaches, and reflects, Claudia purposefully decides when to share her own thinking and when to remain silent.

> Sometimes I know Claudia would just smile at me and ask, "What do you think?" Other times she knew I was frustrated and really needed some help in thinking a lesson or event through. She counted on me to raise questions. Each day I would come into school with a list of questions that Claudia and I would talk about.

Although Claudia's cycle of inquiry shares commonalities with the cycle of reflective supervision (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969) differences exist as well. In Claudia's version of mentoring, she draws on specific understandings she and Julia share as a result of their daily work together. The trust in the process comes out of their relationship and on-going conversations rather than the agreed upon goals traditionally established by university supervisors in espoused platform. Based on Claudia's intimate knowledge of Julia's strengths and weaknesses developed overtime, she is able to quickly focus her observations on areas that reflect Julia's on-going questions.

> You know, after teaching with someone for awhile, you start to hear patterns in the things they worry about. For example, in the beginning of the year I heard management concerns. Later, I heard questions about specific children…

Because Claudia knows Julia so well, she is able to focus on these specific needs even as she teaches herself. Claudia's discussions with Julia about her observations of Julia's teaching are driven by the data that Claudia and Julia collect by the shared experience. The reflective discussions that follow teaching are typically generated by and targeted at Claudia and Julia's shared and unshared questions. These questions then lead to sharing data they recollect from their memory of the teaching experience. This problem-posing behavior has been the foundation for their on-going discussions and center around not only enhancing Julia's teaching practices but typically focus on the children's learning. Inquiry-oriented mentoring is based on a high level of active and deliberate talk and includes a cycle of establishing readiness, co-problem posing, co-planning, co-teaching, and co-reflection outlined in Figure One.

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Conclusion

Inquiry-oriented mentoring is also collaborative in nature and thrives in a context where co-teaching is the norm. In concluding this story of Claudia and Julia, Julia offers one last piece of data to help us understand the power of Claudia's inquiry-oriented mentoring approach. Julia tells her story as a student of teaching in ways that validate, triangulate, and celebrate Claudia's

work described within this text. This story, shared in the form of a letter to a future intern, raises, honors, and authenticates Claudia's work. Here is how Julia captures Claudia as a mentor teacher:

Julia's Letter

Dear 1999 - 2000 Interns,

Congratulations! You made it to the most rewarding and most difficult year you will have at Penn State. Some days you will feel like you're forty as you go to bed at 10 o'clock and curse the drunken college students that are partying in the streets. However, you will also come home feeling invigorated because you realize you have entered an exciting and dynamic career. Each day you will laugh as you think back on the craziness of the day and the comedic stories about your students. The year will fly by so do not let it get away from you! However, don't bite off too much right away. Become comfortable in your classroom and closely observe everything around you. Especially the first day! You will have a whole year to have opportunities to teach and try new things. Take it slow in the beginning because it is easy for everything to go out of control.

I believe the most valuable thing I did in the beginning of my experience was to observe and reflect. "Why is your mentor doing what he/she is doing?", "What is the environment/ climate in the classroom?", reflect on specific students, and ask questions lots of questions. Ask quêstions to your mentor, your PDA, and more importantly to yourself! These questions will guide your observations, decisions, and the way you look at the classroom. Please do not be afraid about asking your mentor questions. That is one of the ways I learned the most this year. After I asked a question we would often reflect together. It may have been about a lesson idea, a way to deal with a child, a procedure, or just why he/she taught a concept in a certain way. You will never know if you do not ask. Do not worry about what other interns are doing in their classrooms. You may be upset because you don't feel that you are doing as much as someone else. Every classroom, mentor, and intern-mentor relationship is unique. Therefore your experience will be unique. You will have plenty of time to try out new things.

One of the best ways to reflect is through your journal. Even though it may be the last thing you feel like doing when you come home, it is so important. Good teachers are good at reflecting. Look at your classroom and everything around you with a critical eye, question things, always ask yourself "why". These journal reflections are a concrete example of your growth throughout the year.

Unfortunately one of the best ways to learn to teach is to fall on your face "a lot". I learned the most this year when I taught my first whole group lesson and everything went wrong. As my class was crumbling around me I was thinking, "Oh, I see how I

could do this differently.", "Next time I should do this.", "Why in the world did I do it this way?". These reflections made my next lesson 100 percent better. You will never know if something works until you try it. It may take many alterations but you will find what works for you.

The inquiry process is one of the most rewarding and powerful experiences as an intern. From the beginning of the year continually verbalize your wonderings about the classroom, your teaching, and the students within it. Instead of the inquiry being a project at the end of the year it can be something you start from day one. These wonderings are great topics for journal reflections and discussions with your mentor.

Use the other interns as a major source of support. The other interns will know how you feel. No one else will understand, because you are doing something totally different. You are no longer a college student. Find time to be with them and talk about all your stresses. They will probably become some of your best friends! I know my fellow interns did.

Even though it is so much work there are a lot of things to look forward to like bus duty, sneezing, the flu, Mondays, tying shoes, sharing, D.P.A., and crazy schedules. Just kidding! You will have Fridays, Christmas vacation, field trips, staff birthdays, and delayed openings. No really! As an intern in a professional development school you will become an integral member of a school community. You will also gain a mentor who will become your teacher, your colleague, and your friend. You will get the opportunity to spend a whole year with a group of unique students and get to know them so well. You will make the transition from student to teacher.

This year will fly by and soon it will be time for you to have your own classroom. When the experience is over, you will feel so much more confident then you feel today. You will be a confident professional that will be ready to be a leader in the teaching world!

Good luck!
Love,
Julia

This case study offers insight into one way mentors can facilitate reform-minded teacher education. By creating a context for collaborative teaching and a high degree of professional talk, Claudia makes problem posing a part of the professional culture within her classroom and

develops in her intern a problem posing stance toward professional practice over the course of a yearlong undergraduate internship.

Still missing from this article is what Sparks-Langer and Colton (1991) describe as the critical element of reflection. How can this critical element emerge as mentors engage in this supervisory work with interns. This critical element refers to the substance that drives the prospective teachers' thinking including their experiences, goals, values, and understandings of social implications. Inquiry-oriented mentoring is only as strong as the critical elements upon which it rests. Thus, as mentors reconceptualize their work, serious attention should be given to developing these critical elements as a part of each phase of the cycle, of their own work, and of the work of the intern. The challenge facing mentors is to find ways to raise these "critical elements" as they work with interns addressing the following concern discussed by Gore and Zeichner (1991):

> We do not think that it makes much sense to promote or assess reflective practice in general without establishing clear priorities for the reflection that emerge out of a reasoned educational and social philosophy. We do not accept the implication that exists throughout much of the literature, that teachers' actions are necessarily better just because they are more deliberate and intellectual.

As interns and mentors engage in conversations around their reasoned educational and social philosophy, reform-minded teacher education can occur. The challenge remaining is how to embed this critical stance into the inquiry cycle. Inquiry can feel threatening to the teacher since inquiry implies critical thinking and continual questioning of one's practice. Hence, teacher educators must work with mentors and interns and help them develop the self-confidence needed

to engage in critical inquiry. Once this type of inquiry oriented culture is established, all participants can begin raising the questions of what makes a reform minded teacher and what makes reform minded teacher education. All participants need to be comfortable with raising questions about their practices.

Further questions raised by this case include: What happens when the intern is not a problem poser herself or a reflective teacher? Do different interns require alternative mentoring approaches? Can all mentors become problem posers about their practice and how do we help them to do this? How do we help practicing teachers understand and appreciate the critical stance necessary for reform-minded teacher education? What happens when the intern's questions become troublesome for the mentor? What happens when the relationship isn't strong enough to sustain the intensity of critical discussion?

Zeichner (1999) discusses the challenges that teacher educators often face as they create prospective teacher field experiences that are inclusive of reform-minded teaching practices. In many cases, prospective and practicing teachers continue to believe that the practically oriented field experiences are the most valuable component of their education (Lortie, 1975; Nemser, 1983; Evertson, 1990). Since historically teacher preparation programs have unsuccessfully influenced teachers in schools, Claudia's reconceptualized role of mentoring might offer a vehicle for creating reform-minded teacher education.